

A COMPLETE STORY EVERY SATURDAY The Evening World. FICTION SECTION

THREE SECTIONS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1922.

SECTION TWO.

LYONS AND MISS MOUSE

By ROYAL BROWN

Illustrated by WILL B. JOHNSTONE

A Romance of Love and Advertising, Children's Dreams and Fairy Godmothers

L EICESTER, a most charming old New England county seat, has a proper pride in its antiquity, and has a proper pride in its modernity.

No organization in Leicester, however, quite equals the Women's City Club in preserving the traditions of the past and yet keeping thoroughly abreast of the times. The first October meeting, each year, is Settlers' Day, and it is a matter of pride that the descendants of all the original inhabitants that can be located be present.

The second meeting of this organization is always Current Events Afternoon. This last year the subject was "Europe—A Dispassionate Diagnosis," with a distinguished speaker from Boston. But the real business of the afternoon was transacted over tea cups and an outline of that would have been interesting. It would have read:

SUBJECT: Leicester's new department store.

Richard Lyons, the proprietor.

Age. (Not a day over thirty surely) Antecedents. (Son of the Lyons—he has a chain of neighborhood department stores, you know.)

Prospects—Financial. (I just dropped in out of curiosity. His prices are under Leyland's in several things. But the store is not so well done.)

Possibilities—Social. (He really is good-looking and plays a good game of golf. Allison Hurd had him out to the Country Club Sunday.)

Allison Hurd, the Lyons's advertising manager.

Common Report. (Her mother was terribly against her taking that business course at Simmons. Her Mary told my Della that she is utterly prostrated by Allison's accepting a position at Lyons's, which, as long as it continues to stick to the no-charge-account plan, will certainly not have the patronage of any but the lower classes.)

Doubts. (One can't help wondering, with a girl, whether going into business is just a whim or whether she really means it. Especially when a girl is as attractive as Allison.)

Suspensions. (It is rather significant that she should take him to the Country Club. No, she hasn't had him up to the house, as yet. Mrs. Hurd is such a stickler for family, you know, and his father started as a bundle boy and they say his mother was a cash girl.)

RICHARD LYONS bade fair to become a personage in Leicester. Allison Hurd already was; for her to actually enter business was a picturesque and colorful event. As for Lyons's other employees, numbering a hundred or so, they were merely fulfilling the destinies for which an all wise Creator had obviously designed them. Even as democratic an organization as the Women's Club could not be expected to take notice of the going to work of Marjorie Morse.

Nevertheless, if it was no event to Leicester, it was to her. That same afternoon she burst into the house like a miniature cyclone.

"Aunt Jane! Oh, Aunt Jane!" she called. Then as her aunt's voice came down from above she added, "Don't come down, I'll come up."

This she said, springing over the stairs. Breathless, with pale eyes aglow,

cheeks pink, she made the great announcement.

"Isn't it lucky!" she concluded. "Just think! I expected to have to study ages yet. But the Principal says I've done so well that he's sure I'll make good. I'm going there the first thing to-morrow morning. Of course it isn't really certain yet, but"

Marjorie left the sentence in the air, while she hugged Aunt Jane.

"Mercy!" gasped Aunt Jane. "Learn to restrain yourself, child! Did you wipe your feet?"

"I'll brush up," promised Marje, un-

abashed. She knew that although Aunt Jane was gray and gaunt and her tongue acid, her heart was not. "And I'll buy you a dozen specs. Oh, I could simply dance. Come on, let's shimmy!"

"Stop! Stop, I won't. Marjorie!"

But Marje, small and slim though she was, had surprising strength. Only the slamming of the front door saved Aunt Jane's last vestige of dignity. Marje rushed down to greet her father with the great news.

"Well, well!" he commented. "Now I can retire to a life of ease!"

Marje, however, was busy arranging

a stage setting. She swept the centre table clear and moved a chair up to it.

"You sit there," she directed, "and pretend it's a spiffy mahogany desk. Then your private secretary says, 'The new stenographer is outside, sir.'"

Marje paused for breath, as he obeyed.

"Now I come in. You must look very critical and businesslike. And ask me a lot of questions, you know!"

"Can you spell 'cat,' Miss?" interpolated her father.

"You aren't the least bit proud—or impressed!" she accused.



"OH, THAT," ALLISON TOLD HIM, "IS WHERE LITTLE MISS MOUSE LIVES."

"I am. Proud as Punch and im-pressed as"—
 "The dickens," suggested Marje, joyously, and called into his lap.
 "Oh, I say," he protested, "if this is what the school teaches as the proper method to approach a prospective employer!"
 "Silly!" said Marje, rubbing her cheek against his. Then she added, "I do hope he's not the awful cutting sarcas-tic kind. If he is I'm die!"

NO one who could have seen her then would have thought that likely. But that was because Marje at home and Marje abroad were totally different persons. And although it was not Richard Lyons, but Allison Hurd whom she had to face, she nearly died anyway.

This her father never suspected, and Aunt Jane would have snapped, "What poppycock!" But Letty Sawyer knew!

"The trouble with you, Marje," she told her, "is that you're too darn shy. You shut up like a clam when a man speaks to you. That doesn't get you anywhere!"

"I don't want to get anywhere," re-torted Marje.

"Try that on somebody else's piano," remarked Letty. She paused and eyed Marje critically. "You really aren't bad-looking. And anyway, look at Mr. Lyons. She's as homely as a hedge fence, but the men all fall for her, just because she baby-vamps them." Then she added abruptly, "Mr. Lyons is awfully good-looking, isn't he?"

Marje nodded.

"They say half the girls have a crush on him," Letty went on. "Is it true Allison Hurd is trying to grab him?"

"I don't think she'll have to try much," said Marje, honestly.

"You mean she's got him roped al-ready?" Letty's tone was eager.

"He likes her," Marje evaded. "Isn't there a thread pulled in your sweater?"

"Egypt's Queen—where? Oh, that! Lend me a thread and needle, Marje. It's bad enough to pay all outdoors for things without having them fall apart the first time you wear them. I bor-rowed \$10 from Dad for a pair of sil-ver slippers and the first time I wore them the heel!"

This-wise, Letty, her mind deftly switched, rambled on while she took the stitch in time that would save nine. Then, discovering it was after 5, she rushed away. The house was very still. Marje's father was taking his Sunday afternoon nap downstairs, Aunt Jane had gone to pay a call.

"She is just the sort," mused Marje, "that would attract him. If I were a man, I'd be crazy enough about her to die!"

The clock downstairs struck 6, re-minding her that she had promised to start supper. She rose, but paused to switch on the light. Then, poised in front of her mirror, she gave herself passionately critical scrutiny.

Brown hair, soft and wavy—but just plain brown; gray eyes, with straight lashes; a straight little, slightly up-titled nose and a mouth that was—oh, mine too big! So she saw herself, with profound dissatisfaction.

"Of all the silly idiots!" she informed herself, and started downstairs.

The rattling of stove-lids in the kitchen awakened her father. He rubbed his eyes.

"Mr—huh," he yawned. "Must be 'most supper-time."

He lay there, however, in comfort-able lethargy. The front door opened and closed; he heard Aunt Jane's voice.

"Not a light lit? And supper not started, I suppose," she grumbled.

She collided with a chair.

Then, from the kitchen, her voice again: "Just as I thought! I suppose you've been out gallivanting around!"

"No, I've been in my room all after-noon," answered Marje.

"You ought to be ashamed of your-self," retorted Aunt Jane, characteris-tically. "After being cooped up all week. And such a lovely afternoon, too! That Allison Hurd just went by, with Mr. Lyons, on horseback. They were talking about you. I couldn't catch just what they said!"

"Why, Aunt Jane!" Marje exclaimed.

"You—you must be mistaken."

"Seems to me," commented Aunt Jane, "that sitting in your room gives you considerable color. As for my not knowing what I'm talking about, I guess I have ears."

Hars she unquestionably had, and, Marje's doubt to the contrary, they had heard accurately. Richard Lyons, rid-ing by, had noticed Marje's home and had been moved to comment on the in-evitable hominess of such old white Colonial cottages, sheltered by dignified old elms.

"Oh, that," Allison told him, "is where little Miss Mouse lives."

"Little Miss Mouse?" he looked puzzled.

"My stenographer," she explained. "Her name is really Morse, but I call her that. She's just out of business college and so shy that she trembles every time I speak to her."

"They are apt to take their first po-sition seriously," he commented.

"That's not the whole of it. She has a crush on me. Think of that, sir!"

"I can well believe it," he said.

This appeased her, yet failed to sil-ence doubts that were beginning to beset him. When he bade her goodby, and turned to the Leicester Lin, they overtook him again. When he reached his room the light he switched on re-vealed him sober and harassed. The Sunday papers were spread over the centre table as he had left them, open to his advertisements. He knew them almost by heart now, yet they drew his eyes again. His glance ran over the various items and stopped at:

"SMALL CHILDREN'S DE LUXE FROCKS OF GEORGETTE, TULLE AND ORGANDIE—A WON-DERFUL VALUE AT \$30."

The frocks had been a gamble; he really believed they were far too ex-pensive for his trade. And that, para-doxically, had driven him to buying them.

"Some merchants," he had often heard his father declare, "say that in a poor neighborhood they can sell only cheap merchandise. To my way of thinking that is a big mistake. I my-self sold waists for \$25 in my first

him pass by and enter Allison Hurd's office.

"Please prepare a special ad for these frocks de luxe for the morning papers," he directed. "I don't care what space you use—I want to move them."

She looked up at him, amused. "I don't believe," she assured him, cheer-fully, "that dynamite would move those frocks."

Richard frowned, without realizing it or that her expression had swiftly changed. "It seems to me that if there is anything in advertising!"

Her eyes were chillier than he had ever seen them, but no chillier than her voice. "Advertising," she informed him, "will make people buy what they want or need. It won't cram goods they don't want down their throats and no sensible person expects it to."

"It means a lot to me just now." He paused, and then, hoping to enlist her interest he went on. "Confidentially these frocks, with business conditions as they are, may prove the straw that will break the camel's back."

But Allison, still very much outraged, refused to yield an inch. "You should have thought of business conditions when you purchased them," she re-torted. "And not try to make me the scapegoat."

Now, neither realized that he had left the door ajar or that Marje sitting just outside could not but hear everything they said.

"O—hi!" she gasped, involuntarily.

The next instant Richard had emerged. But he had no eyes for her anyway. He looked like a young man who is making a tremendous effort to keep himself from saying something he might later regret, and little stenogra-phers, hectically at work, were outside his ken. He passed rapidly and Marje, catching her breath, saw what she had written.

"* * * in view of existing business conditions we do not feel that a further advance in your rates is equitable and therefore beg to say that oh it's awful! Awful!"

This, she realized, would never do. She must keep her mind on what she was doing, although it was awful, sim-ply awful!

The buzzer beside her desk made her jump; she snapped up her note-book and pencil and rushed into Allison Hurd's office.

"A letter to Mr. Lyons, please," she directed and began forthwith.

"I feel that everything considered it is best for me to offer my resignation as advertising manager. This I there-fore do, with the request that it be accepted at your earliest convenience."

To which she added, "Please type it at once and bring it to me to sign."

"Of course he won't accept it," Marje assured herself. "And the frocks will sell and everything will be all right again."

WHEN noon came she left her lunch untouched to go down and look at the fatal frocks.

They hung displayed in all their glory, as delicately hued as a fairy's trousseau. Marje had been pre-pared to hate them, but the first sight of them opened up a vista into her own not so remote childhood. Then Aunt Jane had made all her dresses—and Aunt Jane was what is described as a good plain sewer.

"If I could have had a dress like one of these just once," she thought, "I think I would have died of pure joy!"

"It seems as if they must sell," she said, unconsciously speaking aloud.

"Believe me, they don't!" remarked a salesgirl.

"They would," retorted Marje—but to herself, "if mothers remembered!"

As she opened her lunch, it grew on her.

"If somebody could only make moth-ers understand," she mused.

She thrust aside her half-finished lunch and began to work out what was in her mind, because paper and pencil had somehow become more of a neces-sity than sandwiches and cocoa. Her noon hour had passed, but she still sat there, the rudimentary copy of her first advertisement before her. She won-dered if it was too silly to show Allison Hurd and decided that it was. But this did not deter her from ferreting out a Sunday paper and cutting out a pic-



"INDEED!" ALLISON'S VOICE WAS CHILL AND EDGED NOW. "MAY I SEE IT?"

"Let's gossip," she said. "I'll race you home."

ALISON HURD assuredly had Richard Lyons guessing. In so far as what might be termed her purely feminine campaign went, he would have freely admitted that her presence in Leicester was making his own there much more enjoyable. As to her presence in the store, he—well, there were moments when the purely feminine campaign managed somehow to interfere with dispassionate discussion of her adver-tising campaign.

This very afternoon she had given him an opening. She had asked him how he liked the store's Sunday adver-tising. He had paused, choosing his words.

"Don't tell me it's out and dried—and conservative," she challenged, quickly. "I know it—but so is Leicester."

Her eyes had met his with smiling confidence. He hesitated and then sur-rendered absolutely, yet again.

"Of course you are a better judge of that than I," he acknowledged.

store, though my predecessor had never had the courage to stock anything higher than \$5."

"They may go," he thought, "but it was a fool stunt to take a chance right now when I need every cent of capital."

Leicester would have wondered at that.

"Remember," his father's last letter had read, "that I always decide in ad-vance exactly how much I'm willing to gamble on a store's success. I believe in making the manager put the store across on the capital allotted for the purpose. Not until the store has made money itself does he get any more from the general treasury. I believe in every tub standing on its own bottom."

"I suppose there would be a sort of a comedy touch in a lot of children's de-luxe frocks knocking this tub off its bottom," he thought. Then he swept the papers together and stuffed them into the waste-basket. "Well, I'll know where I stand by this time to-morrow," he decided.

Even sooner than that he knew. At 11 o'clock the next morning Marje saw

ture of the frock used with the advertisement there and pasting it on her own copy.

"That looks better," she thought, holding it off at arm's length.

"Hello!" exclaimed a voice behind her. "What's that?"

Marje jumped too late.

"Let's have a look at it," requested Richard Lyons.

Marje prayed that the floor might open up and swallow her. She jumped again, when he exclaimed:

"This is something like! I knew she could do it if she tried. What size is she going to run it in?"

Marje was mercifully saved from answering.

"Run what?" demanded Allison Hurd's cool, assured voice.

Richard turned to her, his face alight. "This," he explained, holding up poor Marje's advertisement. "I'm tickled stiff with it."

"Indeed?" Allison's voice was chill and edged now. "May I see it?"

Taken aback, he let her have it. She cast her eye over it and then let it slip to Marje's desk with a little contemptuous turn of her wrist.

"May I ask you where you got it?" Richard looked bewildered. "Why—didn't you write it?"

"I should hope not. It's positively puerile."

"Why, she isn't even a good sport!" he thought. Then he turned back to Marje. "Who did write it?" he asked abruptly.

Suddenly it dawned upon him.

"Why—you wrote it yourself!" he exclaimed.

"I should have thought!" interposed Allison. "You might have guessed."

Richard's eyes went to her. He was only human and not yet thirty and so it was not fair to attribute his answer—as Allison did—to his breeding.

"I am surprised I did not," he commented, in a tone to match hers.

The color flooded Allison's face. "You will please remember that as long as I am advertising manager I am responsible in the public mind for what appears over the store signature. Therefore I prefer—"

"I am sorry," he broke in. "But as you already tendered your resignation—"

Allison waited for no more. And, although her breeding was surely of the best, it cannot be denied that her office door slammed behind her. The impact made Marje jump—and apparently restored power of speech to her.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" she murmured, unhappily.

Richard did not hear her. "I'll take charge of this," he told her, and departed forthwith.

THE next quarter of an hour was the worst Marje had ever experienced. She dreaded the moment when Allison Hurd should reappear. When the door finally opened Allison Hurd swept—there is no other word for it—down upon her.

"The chauffeur will call for my personal belongings," she said, in a tone immeasurably aloof. "Please see that he gets them."

"Of course," assented Marje, hastily. Her eyes were passionately pleading. But Allison Hurd was not to be deterred from characteristic use of what those who knew her best called her claws.

"And I congratulate you," she went on, "on your quick seizure of opportunity. I apologize for having underrated you in the past."

Marje said nothing, she could not. But after Allison had gone she thought, over and over again, "Oh, how, how could she say such a thing!"

Those who knew Allison better would have realized that she had but begun. She went directly to the Country Club where she knew a considerable number of her own circle would be found. She airily announced that she had left Lyons's and then put into circulation a deftly manipulated version of the episode that, before night-fall, had managed to spread throughout Leicester.

Small wonder, indeed, that the headlines in the Leicester papers the next morning were of no importance compared to Lyons's advertisement. Everybody searched that out at once, to read: **BE YOUR OWN LITTLE GIRL'S FAIRY GODMOTHER THIS CHRISTMAS.**

"Once upon a time there was a little girl who always went to parties in somebody else's made-over clothes. One day the little girl next door took her into the spare room and showed her, spread out on the bed, the dress SHE was going to

wear to the party the next day. The dress was pink georgette and it was accordion pleated. It wouldn't wear and wouldn't wash but it was the loveliest thing she had ever seen. That little girl has never wanted anything since so much as she wanted a frock like that.

"And oh, how she longed for a fairy godmother!"

"Even the littlest girl feels that way. When, in the fairy tale, the fairy godmother waves her wand and a beautiful gown drops on Cinderella's shoulders, every little girl thrills through and through, as she pictures HERSELF in Cinderella's place. And if YOU have a little girl, you can make this the most wonderful Christmas of all for her. You can be HER fairy godmother and give her a frock that will always be a beautiful memory, a frock that—"

Others, presumably, read further. But Aunt Jane did not. "I did the best

Grozier wouldn't ask him pointblank"—

"I'll bet she would."

"Well, I wouldn't. And neither would you!"

"Not in so many words," admitted Letty. "But you might say that you hoped he'd come again"—She broke that off abruptly to shift to, "Marje, you must get him to take you to the Christmas Eve dance!"

"Invites him to take me, I suppose!"

"Don't be silly! But you could mention it and give him a chance to invite you. Do you suppose any girl, even a raving beauty, can just sit still and have a man drop into her lap?"

"I thought it was the other way around—girls dropping into men's laps!"

"If you would only talk up that way to men," wailed Letty.

"I see myself! Besides I haven't a thing to wear!"

"Not a thing to wear! Do you mean to say you aren't going to take that dress Mr. Lyons offered you?"

NEXT SATURDAY'S COMPLETE STORY

The Men of Zanzibar

By RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

LOVE—MYSTERY—SURPRISES

One of the Best Stories in the English Language

ORDER YOUR EVENING WORLD IN ADVANCE

I could for you," she announced, dropping the paper. "I—I—"

Marje's father looked up from his bacon and eggs.

The abrupt departure of Aunt Jane, kitchenward, and Marje's instant pursuit, left him absolutely speechless and even more bewildered.

But Marje understood. "Of course you did!" she soothed, vigorously. "I—oh, I didn't mean it that way, Aunt Jane. Please don't feel so. You've done everything for me. I—I wish I'd never written that old ad. Everything has gone wrong, just because I didn't mind my own business."

To that Richard Lyons would never have agreed. That very morning Marje, looking up, saw him smiling down at her.

"I felt in my bones that you had hit the exact note," he assured her. "And the way those frocks are moving out of the store proves it. I wish now I'd stocked twice as many."

"I'm—I'm glad," Marje managed to articulate.

"Of course," he added abruptly. "You know we pay for suggestions!"

"Oh, I'd rather not be paid for it," protested Marje hastily.

Richard considered her, plainly puzzled. "Then let's put it this way. Suppose you"—he smiled again—"be your own fairy godmother and take your choice of any frock or gown we have in stock?"

This absolutely demanded acknowledgment. "Thank you," murmured Marje, and began to type furiously.

THE episode was ended—and yet it wasn't. Richard Lyons so far ignored the precedent established by fiction as to appoint in Allison Hurd's place not Marje, but a young man named Jefferson Allen—whom he took over from another store in the Lyons's system. He did, however, tell his new advertising manager that that little Miss Morse had ideas worth listening to. "Keep an eye on her," he suggested.

This young Mr. Allen was more than willing to do. Indeed, during the afternoon of his second Sunday in Leicester he decided to drop in on her. And so it was that an enthralled Letty and an utterly appalled Marje saw him approaching the front door.

"You sly puss!" exclaimed Letty.

"You never told me a word about him!"

"There must be a mistake," Marje gasped. "I—oh, Letty, don't go!"

"Catch me butting in," retorted Letty.

"It's me for the back door!"

Mr. Allen was one of those who are perfectly content with an audience. He was satisfied graciously, to include her father and Aunt Jane when they appeared later. Then, as graciously, he permitted himself to be prevailed upon to stay to Sunday night supper. Marje rose promptly to help Aunt Jane with this, but Aunt Jane refused aid.

"You stay and entertain your company, Marje," she said.

"That was bad enough," Marje told Letty, subsequently, "but then she called to father to come out—and he went and never reappeared."

"How late did he stay?" demanded Letty.

"Until almost 10."

"Is he coming again next Sunday?"

"How do I know?"

"Marje Morse! Didn't you invite him?"

"Why, Letty Sawyer. Even Missed

Marje colored anew. "I'd rather not!"

"Marje Morse! You need a guardian, absolutely. Here's a chance to get a perfectly good dress and a perfectly good man for a dance and you—you say you'd rather not. I'm coming to the store to-morrow to help you pick out a dress. And I'll see that you do, too!"

And she did. Those who said Letty would never get anywhere because she was such a scatter-brain did her a wrong. She had streaks of pertinacity, and on the following Sunday she sang her siren's song.

"There!" she announced, surveying Marje's coiffure with the pride of a creator. "It makes you look a hundred per cent. prettier, Marje. Now let's try on your new frock—I haven't really seen it yet!"

"Aunt Jane has," commented Marje. "And she says that she never expected to see the day!"

"Oh, Aunt Jane!" sniffed Letty. "Where is it—in the closet?"

Marje brought it forth and spread it on the bed. Exquisite in line and coloring, spangled here and there with bits of crystal embroidery, it was like a spring flower with dew on it. Just to look at it lit little lamps that shone in Marje's eyes.

"It's a perfect peach!" Letty said. "Put it on and I'll look you up."

Marje, slipping out of her little blue serge, wriggled into the gown of gowns. In Marje's eyes, as she slowly pinched before her glass, there was that which proved her a true daughter of Eve. Yet:

"You are sure that it isn't too—too striking?"

"Striking! Oh, my aunt!" moaned Letty. "You look exactly like Cinderella waiting for the prince to appear. Why, if Mr. Allen could see you now he'd positively grovel!"

A PRAL from the front door-bell stopped her short.

"There he is now!" announced Letty gleefully.

Marje gave her a beseeching glance.

"Run down, Letty," she begged. "Tell him I'll be down in a few minutes!"

"You watch me! Answer your own door-bells!"

"But I can't! What would he think?"

"Tell him you've just been trying on your new dress. Ask him how he likes it. Hurry—there goes the bell again—if you don't go I will. And I'll tell him exactly why!"

"You wouldn't! You couldn't!"

"Oh, couldn't I?" said Letty, girlish, and started for the door.

Marje, panic-stricken, shot past her, Letty, leaning over the banisters, whispered a last word of advice.

"Don't get rattled if he looks surprised. It will only be because he never realized what a perfect peach you are. I mean it!"

Marje managed to open the front door.

"Egypt's Queen!" gasped Letty, and just saved herself from tumbling over the banister.

"Is Miss Morse?"—the visitor began, and then, "Why I didn't know you for an instant. May I come in?"

Marje nodded, dumbly. And in came Richard Lyons himself!

"I happened to be passing," he explained, "and I thought I'd drop in."

"Can you beat it!" thought Letty. "And me trying to help her!"

Richard had indeed been passing, deeply preoccupied with a problem for which there seemed no solution. The sight of Marje's home, with the rays of the winking sun filling the windows, had penetrated his absorption. He remembered that Allison Hurd had identified the house for him and, acting on an impulse, he turned in at the front gate.

"Of course it's preposterous to expect her to suggest anything," he assured himself. "But she is clever."

This discovery was almost eclipsed by another, as he stood there, smiling down at her.

"Why!" he thought, "she's positively pretty!"

She thought it was the frock he was looking at.

"I—I was just trying this on," she managed.

"Is this the reward for that advertisement of yours?" he broke in quickly.

Marje nodded. "If you'll just wait a minute or two, I'll change!"

"Oh, please don't. I like it immensely. I had no idea anything half so lovely was to be found in Lyons's. Besides I can only stop a minute."

He paused, conscious that her attention had wandered. As her eyes came back to him she blushed violently—though that was not the word that occurred to him.

"Excuse me," she begged, "I—won't you come into the living-room?"

This he did not understand. But Letty did.

"You knew," she charged, an hour later, "that I was simply perishing with curiosity and you deliberately dragged him into the living-room. What did he talk about anyway?"

"He's having trouble getting extra help for the Christmas rush. Leyland's has gobbled everybody up."

"Is that all he talked about?" asked Letty slyly.

"No," admitted Marje. "He talked—"

"And simply stared. I'll bet he did. You look like a changed girl!"

"I'll be one before Aunt Jane gets home," commented Marje. "I was petrified all the time he was here for fear she'd march in and tell me to go upstairs and get—dressed! She'd be capable of it!"

Nevertheless, after Letty had gone she drew all her curtains and switched on all the lights and turned yet again to her mirror.

"It's the gown—not me!" she assured herself, severely.

But when the next day she forced herself to his office, she was in blue serge again; yet there was, in his eyes, that same quickened something that comes only when a man begins to see a girl he had only looked at before.

"A—about extra help for Christmas," she began.

"You've an idea?" he exclaimed, eagerly.

"I—the Women's Club is having a drive for a clubhouse of their own. They're doing all kinds of things to get money. I thought that perhaps, if you'd give them a percentage on their sales, some of the members would be glad to work here during the rush season and turn the money over to the fund."

He rose to his feet, his eyes alight.

"They'll jump at it. Why that percentage idea in itself is a stroke of genius. They'll draw all the trade they can to help swell the amount. Miss Morse, you're a wonder!"

"Mercy, child, what's come over you," demanded Aunt Jane after supper. "You've been standing there wiping that one dish for five minutes!"

The door-bell pealed an interruption.

"I can guess!" commented Aunt Jane. "Give me that dish towel and run along!"

"I telephoned the Women's Club," announced Richard. "And they jumped at the chance. I thought you'd be interested!"

"Oh, I am!" she exclaimed. Then: "Won't—won't you stop in?"

Richard did, and—well, there is no denying that at the next Current Events meeting of the Women's Club the topic for the day was of secondary interest. For that night saw the start of something that carried Richard fast and far. But then, as Allison Hurd declared, he merely followed precedent.

"His father married a cash girl, he's marrying a stenographer." Upholding family tradition, you see.

Richard, however, put it differently.

"But I don't see why," began Marje—a glorified, rosy, yet still incredulous Marje—"why you?"

"I do," he assured her. "You are so clever that I need you in the business and so adorably pretty that if I don't gobble you up some other man!"

"Pretty?" echoed Marje, with widened eyes. "Why, I'm not. Not the least bit. My mouth"—she blushed—"is simply miles too!"

"Too far away," he interjected promptly. "Come back here!"

But Aunt Jane! She—

"Her turn comes later. Please!" And she pleased.

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